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## SOME RECENT STUDIES ON THE IRANIAN RELIGIONS

LOUIS H. GRAY

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

It is curious, and perhaps significant, that the two most important volumes on the Iranian religions which have appeared within the last decade should have been written by scholars who were not professed Iranists. Professor James Hope Moulton, the author of the Hibbert Lectures on *Early Zoroastrianism* (London, 1913), was a theologian and a hellenist; Professor Raffaele Pettazzoni, who has just given us his *La Religione di Zarathustra* (Bologna, 1920),<sup>1</sup> is a student of comparative religion of the finest and sanest type. Pettazzoni seems not to have had the advantage of consulting Moulton's volume; but while from one point of view this may be regrettable, from another it has worked for good, since two scholars have reached independently results which, when combined, put the genesis of Iranism in an entirely new light and go far toward the solution of many perplexing problems, if, indeed, they may not have solved the riddle as a whole. Of Moulton's work I have expressed an opinion elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> and subsequent reflection has only confirmed that judgement.

I can conceive no higher praise for both these scholars than to say that the work of either is comparable only with that of the other. Each is, however, distinctly individual; *Early Zoroastrianism* treats solely of pre-zoroastrian Iranism and the Gāthās, while *La Religione di Zarathustra* surveys the system from its beginnings to the present day.

Pettazzoni's volume is divided into eight chapters: 'The Problem of Zoroastrianism,' 'Pre-zarathustrian "Paganism"' and the Religious Reform of Zarathustra,' 'Origin and Early

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i of the *Storia delle Religione*, edited by him.

<sup>2</sup> *Expository Times*, xxv (1914), 256-257; *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vii (1914), 396.

Times of Zoroastrianism,' 'Zoroastrianism in Persia and the Achaemenidae,' 'Foreign Domination and the Persian Middle Ages,' 'The Persian Renaissance under the Sassanids,' and 'Zoroastrianism and Islam.' The work is fully documented, and reveals not merely breadth of reading but sound judgement. I accept its conclusions in principle, as I accept those of Dr. Moulton.

Combining these conclusions, so far as the beginnings of Iranism are concerned, we may now see that this system consists of at least five strata. Without pretending to exhaust the components of each, and disregarding doubtful matters, we may hold that to the Persian religion (that is, that of Persis) were due aniconism, animal sacrifice, and nature-worship (that is, essentially, the system described by Herodotus); to extra-persian pre-zoroastrianism, Mithra, Haoma, Yima, and other elements common to the Avesta and the Veda; to Zoroastrianism (that is, the teachings of Zoroaster himself), monotheism and war against evil, in short all the ethical element; to Magianism, dualism, exposure of corpses, marriage with near kin, horror of mountains, and the minute prescriptions of the *Vidēvdāt*; and to Babylonia, oneiromancy, astrology, and certain myths, as for instance that of the attempt of Kāy Kā'ūs to fly to heaven on the back of eagles, which is plainly a reminiscence of an episode in the story of Etana. Further investigations may reveal yet other sources for a system which should, perhaps, be termed 'Iranism' rather than 'Zoroastrianism.'

Pettazzoni, like Moulton,<sup>3</sup> is quite right in declaring that Zoroastrianism is monotheistic, not dualistic, and he correctly says:

In reality dualism is not a negation of monotheism; therefore it is monotheism itself in two opposed and contrary aspects. It does not precede monotheism; therefore it is a reflex of it. . . . In dualism all those divine elements are present which monotheism denies and denies again, but they are present in the only form compatible with the concept (also present) of one god. . . . Thus Anrama(i)nyu is not essentially another god beside Ahura Mazda; he is Ahura Mazda himself in the inversion of all his qualities.

<sup>3</sup> *Early Zoroastrianism*, pp. 12-16; dualism is a Magian doctrine (*ibid.* pp. 201, 220, 322).

Anrama(i)nyu is the heir and the exponent of all the gods (*daēva*) of the polytheistic paganism; he is not himself a traditional god; he is a new figure who enters with the Reform, substituted for all the divine figures of the tradition, and thus reducing all its representatives to unity.

The Zoroastrian reform took place, Pettazzoni believes, "in the course of the seventh century B.C., in a point of north-western Iran." This implied date for Zoroaster seems indeed the most probable, although Moulton<sup>4</sup> would set it about 1000 B.C. A matter of much more gravity is the relation between Iranism and Judaism (pp. 76-84). Pettazzoni here takes a step which I have long considered necessary, and here again he is found in virtual agreement with Moulton (pp. 68-73). These two scholars hold that the debt was not that of Judaism to Iranism, but the reverse. It was the Jews who taught Zoroastrianism its monotheism; the messianic concept was borrowed by Iran from Israel; the figure of Satan and the doctrines of immortality and the fall were genuinely Jewish. At the most, Pettazzoni will admit only that dualism was borrowed by the Jews, and Moulton well says: "It seems therefore that in all things that really matter we have no adequate grounds for believing Jewish ideas indebted to any outside source which can be connected with the Avesta." To this list the doctrine of angels and archangels may be added; the concept seems to me too genuinely Hebraic to be explained away merely by *argumenta e silentio*, and מלאכים are mentioned before the exilic period.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, Moulton's argument that the Magi were non-iranian<sup>6</sup> seems preferable to the view that they were Persian. This involves the implication, in spite of Pettazzoni (p. 84), that Zoroaster was not a Magian. A similar theory was advanced in 1908 by Zaborowski in a work which has failed of its deserved recognition among Iranists and which neither Moulton nor Pettazzoni quotes.<sup>7</sup> Zaborowski lays

<sup>4</sup> *Treasure of the Magi*, p. 6. "Nothing earlier than the tenth century can be admitted, it would seem, and another century or two may be quite reasonably allowed" (p. 13).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also Gaster, 'Parsiism in Judaism,' in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ix (1917), 637-640.

<sup>6</sup> *Early Zoroastrianism*, Lecture vi; cf. his article 'Magi,' in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, viii (1915), pp. 242-244; *Treasure of the Magi*, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> *Les peuples aryens d'Asie et d'Europe*, Paris, 1908, pp. 189-196.

stress on the antipathy between Magi and Persians, and quite correctly writes:

Les mages étaient sûrement, en effet, vis-à-vis des Perses, les dépositaires du savoir, des conceptions, des symboles, des formules, des vieilles civilisations. . . . Ceux-ci ont opéré sur un ensemble de croyances existant en Médie, alors que l'apport des Aryens y était déjà considérable; ou mieux ils ont adapté à quelques formes religieuses, à quelques prescriptions plus anciennes assurant la domination de leur caste, des croyances plus simples que l'hégémonie politique des Perses imposait.

None the less, Pettazzoni (pp. 114–115) also distinguishes between Persians and Medes, the priests of the latter being the Magi; and he carefully and sympathetically outlines Herodotus' account of the religion of the Persians. He makes the interesting political suggestion that the internal struggle between the old religion and the Zoroastrian reform aided Cyrus in his conquest of Media; and as regards the problem of the faith of the early Achaemenians, he declares — most correctly in my opinion — “Dario fu un mazdeista senza essere un zoroastriano.” It was in Persia proper that Zoroastrianism was constrained to become polytheistic (pp. 133–134), and the divergencies between the Persian and Zoroastrian systems are discussed with proper fullness (pp. 133–139), the further distinctions between Zoroastrianism and Magianism being given in the various studies of Moulton.

Alien rule of Iran solidified the union of all these elements, and thus, when foreign sovereignty could be shaken off, the composite religion had become an emblem of nationality. This is the explanation of the great strength of Iranism, in its Zoroastrian form, during the Sassanid period (p. 170); and it was precisely for this reason that Manichaeism was banned as being universalistic and contrary to the nationalistic spirit of the later period (pp. 190–193). The relations between the Sassanian state and the Jews and Christians in Persia are adequately sketched (pp. 193–199, 201–204), but one of the best studies on these matters <sup>8</sup> the author seems not to have con-

<sup>8</sup> Wigram, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church*, London, 1910; cf. also Gray, ‘Zoroastrian and other Ethnic Religious Material in the *Acta Sanctorum*,’ in *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society*, 1913–14, pp. 37–55. I have not yet been able to consult Braun’s *Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer*, Kempten, 1915.

sulted. The curious figure of Mazdak receives attention (pp. 199–200),<sup>9</sup> as does the difficult question of the religion of the Parthians (p. 171);<sup>10</sup> and Mithraism is discussed (pp. 163–169) as a syncretism of old Iranism, the Babylonian Shamash-cult, and the orgiastic religions of Asia Minor.<sup>11</sup> In this connection it is of interest to note that the *Deus Areimanius* of Mithraic inscriptions is confirmed not only by the underworld deity of the Persians mentioned by Herodotus (vii, 114) and Plutarch (*De Isid. et Osir.* 46),<sup>12</sup> but also by the use of the Armenian *Sandaramet*, the Persian form of the Avesta *Spenta Armaiti* (an earth-goddess), to translate γῆ κάρω in Ezekiel 31, 16, and καταχθόνιος in Philippians 2, 10.<sup>13</sup> To this same period belongs the “Image of Vohuman” in an inscription from Assur,<sup>14</sup> thus confirming the statement of Strabo (p. 733 c) on this subject.

The Sassanian empire, Pettazzoni judiciously remarks (p. 185), “was not a theocratic state, although it was clerical.” This involves a difficult question, which here can only be asked, not answered. How is one to explain such a passage as that contained, for instance, in the Greek and Pahlavi inscription of Ardashīr at Naqs-i-Rustam, where the monarch is ‘divine’ (θεός, *bagī*), ‘of the race of the gods’ (ἐκ γένους θεῶν, *minū chitri min yastān*), ‘son of the divine Pāpak’? Does this mean what it says? The concept is not Indo-iranian, but it may possibly be a reminiscence of Babylonia.<sup>15</sup> In any event, there is, according to Pettazzoni (pp. 189–190), a distinct trace of Babylon in the concept of Zrvan Akarana (‘Boundless

<sup>9</sup> See Modi, ‘Mazdak, the Iranian Socialist,’ in *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, Bombay, 1918, pp. 116–131.

<sup>10</sup> See the recent study by Unvala, ‘The Religion of the Parthians,’ in *Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Madressa Jubilee Volume*, Bombay, 1914, pp. 1–10.

<sup>11</sup> See also Jones, ‘Mithraism,’ in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, viii (1915), 752–759.

<sup>12</sup> Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, pp. 128–130.

<sup>13</sup> Meillet, ‘Sur les termes religieux iraniens en Arménien,’ in *Revue des études arméniennes*, i (1921), 233–236.

<sup>14</sup> מַרְדֵּתִי וְהוֹמָן (?) (ד) יֵא; Jensen, in *Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1919, p. 1018; cf. also Jackson, ‘Images and Idols (Persian),’ in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vii (1914), 151–155.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Gray, ‘King (Indian),’ in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vii (1914), 720–721; Casartelli, ‘King (Iranian),’ *ibid.* 721–723; Mercer, “Emperor”-Worship in Babylonia,’ in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, xxxvi (1917), 360–380.

Time') as an attempt to solve the problem of Magian dualism. This concept was, I think, far more widely spread than the Avesta texts imply, and I strongly incline to regard Zarvanism as the prevailing sect in the Sassanian period.<sup>16</sup>

In his concluding chapter Pettazzoni does not mention two of the chief works on the modern period: Dosabhai Framji Karaka's *History of the Parsis* (2 vols., London, 1884), and Mlle. Menant's *Les Parsis* (part 1, Paris, 1898).<sup>17</sup> We must also bear in mind that there are some interesting survivals of Iranism in remote corners of the Caucasus and the Pamirs. The former are discussed in an article by me on the Thushes and kindred tribes, which will appear in the concluding volume of the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*; the material concerning the latter is still to be collected and digested.<sup>18</sup>

It is not easy for me to write of Moulton's *Treasure of the Magi: A Study of Modern Zoroastrianism*,<sup>19</sup> for its printed pages are the echo of a voice no mortal ears may ever hear again. When one compares this volume with his *Early Zoroastrianism*, one sees the difference between the mere scholar and the man. Deep as is my admiration for the erudition of the *Early Zoroastrianism*, which led me to revise my former outlook upon the Iranian religion, it has not the human touch of the *Treasure*. All the learning is here that adorned the *Hibbert Lectures*; but, in addition, there is the more precious gift of sincere, deep, simple, manly Christian piety.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society*, 1913-14, p. 39; cf. also Gray, 'Fate (Iranian),' in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, v (1912), 792-793; Edwards, 'Sects (Zoroastrian),' *ibid.* xi (1920), 345-347; Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Theology*, New York, 1914, pp. 203-205.

<sup>17</sup> See also Mlle. Menant's articles, 'Gabars,' in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi (1913), 147-156; 'Parsis,' *ibid.* ix (1917), 640-650; Jackson, *Persia Past and Present*, New York, 1906, pp. 353-400.

<sup>18</sup> See, *inter alia*, Kovalevsky, 'Survivals of Iranian Culture in the Caucasian Highlands,' in *Archaeological Review*, i (1888), 313-331; De Ujfalvy, *Les Aryens au nord et au sud de l'Hindou-Kouch*, Paris, 1896, pp. 91, 96-97, 329-332, 334, 337-338; Bid-dulph, *Tribes of the Hindu Koosh*, Calcutta, 1880, pp. 75, 108; Olufsen, *Through the Unknown Pamirs*, London, 1904, pp. 197-199, 205-206.

<sup>19</sup> Oxford, 1917 (in the series entitled *The Religious Quest of India*).

<sup>20</sup> A touching tribute to my friend is paid by the Reverend Bardsley Brash in his exquisite chapter on 'Another "Verray Gentil Knight"' in *Letters to 'The Happy Warrior'*, pp. 25-30.

I do not wish to review this book; I read it still with too much sorrow for the tragic loss of its author and with too much gladness that such men as he have lived and still live upon this earth. I can add only a few references to studies which he could not see.<sup>21</sup> Suffice it to say that while the first portion of the volume (pp. 1-118) covers ground similar to that of the *Early Zoroastrianism*, it is written from a wholly different outlook; but the second portion, 'The Parsis' (pp. 119-254), deals with matters which Moulton had not previously discussed in any printed form. Here he has chapters on 'The Community,' 'The Priesthood,' 'Ceremonial Life: Fire-Temples and Towers of Silence,' 'Ceremonial Life: Outside the Fire-Temple,' 'Orthodoxy and Reform,' 'Parsi Piety,' 'The Parsis and Christian Propaganda,' 'The Crown of Zoroastrianism.' Many things are here written which the Parsis would do well to heed: the chill, negative rationalism to which their attempts at reform are but too conducive, and the follies of the pseudo-oriental theosophy wherein many Parsis take refuge, are unsparingly but honestly exposed (pp. 173-193), as is the equally despairing eclecticism where others find a facile but shallow harbor (pp. 207-209). Fully recognizing (p. 211) that "Zoroastrianism differs essentially from all other non-Christian creeds in that its fundamental documents set forth a system which calls for supplement, but nowhere includes what is untrue or unworthy," Moulton could not but direct attention to certain grave deficiencies in this faith. It lacks love and renunciation, it is weak in the doctrines of grace and forgiveness, it stresses works and ignores faith (pp. 194-206, 211); in these respects, I would add, it is inferior, much as I admire it, to Vaiṣṇavism and Northern Buddhism, which, however imperfectly, at least teach love.

<sup>21</sup> Regarding Mani (p. 113) see now Dhalla, 'Mani's Asceticism from the Zoroastrian Point of View,' in *Madressa Jubilee Volume*, pp. 89-99; on the question of proselytism (pp. 127-131) see Gray, 'Missions (Zoroastrian),' in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, viii (1915), 749-751, and Mlle. Menant, 'Une évolution sociale chez les Parsis,' in *Revue d'ethnographie et de sociologie*, 1914, pp. 118-130, 168-180, 235-247; on the researches of Dr. Spooner (pp. 63, 74, 81-82, 142) see Modi, 'Ancient Pātaliputra', in his *Asiatic Papers*, ii (Bombay, 1917), 211-286.



From these two volumes one turns to a third only to meet with chilling disappointment. Carl Clemen's *Die griechischen und lateinischen Nachrichten über die persische Religion* <sup>22</sup> bears the date of 1920, although its preface states that it was completed some years since. This work is written from the standpoint of a half-century ago. Clemen is quite aware of Moulton's views, but he expressly rejects them (pp. 207-233). His denial of Moulton's (and now, doubtless, of Pettazzoni's) advance seriously affects the worth of his own study. The use of the term 'Persian' as synonymous with Zoroastrian, Magian, and Indo-iranian lands Clemen in difficulties and contradictions among his sources which he seeks to avoid in ways more ingenious than convincing. I can appreciate these difficulties, for I was myself involved in them until Moulton and Pettazzoni set me free.

The entire work is so vitiated by this fundamental error that it is scarcely possible to review it in detail. Fortunately one may, by using the hypothesis of stratifications, build up a very satisfactory account of the Greek and Latin writers on the Iranian systems from the same author's collection of *Fontes historiae religionis Persicae*.<sup>23</sup> Such a compilation was needed as a supplement to my own collection of Greek and Latin data concerning Zoroaster;<sup>24</sup> and it is a matter of satisfaction that it has at last appeared. With Clemen's general conclusion regarding the value of these sources (p. 202) I find myself in full agreement:

The picture of the Persian religion that we might make on the basis of the Avesta is enriched in very extraordinary fashion by the Greek and Latin data. Both among the Achaemenians and among the Persian people we have learned an abundance of views and tendencies which the native sources scarcely imply or wholly fail to imply. In many cases, it is true, they had nothing to do with the official religion, yet in part they belonged to it. . . . On the other hand, very much that we read in our present Avesta, especially in the Yasna, Visprat, and Vidēvdāt, is not mentioned by the Greeks and

<sup>22</sup> *Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten*, xvii, Heft 1, Giessen, 1920.

<sup>23</sup> *Fontes historiae religionum ex auctoribus Graecis et Latinis collecti*, Fasciculus 1, Bonn, 1920.

<sup>24</sup> In Jackson, *Zoroaster*, New York, 1899, pp. 231-273; cf. my supplement, 'Additional Classical Passages Mentioning Zoroaster's Name,' in *Le Muséon*, ix (1908), 311-318.

Latins; but it would be as incorrect to delineate the Persian religion only according to the latter as to regard them so slightly as has heretofore been usual.

On the basis of the classical references, Clemen concludes that Zoroaster flourished about 1000 B.C., or even earlier; and that he was born and labored in Western Iran (pp. 27-28, 42).

Occasionally, quite apart from what I regard as his fatal fundamental error, Clemen appears to me to slip. To see in the 'Agonaces' of Pliny xxx, i [2], 4, a corruption of 'Αγοραμά-ζδης, 'Ahura Mazda' (p. 49), seems rather violent; and it is by no means certain that Agradates, the original name of Cyrus (Strabo, p. 729 c), meant 'Ahura-given' (p. 63);<sup>25</sup> it may more reasonably be explained as Iranian \*Ag(h)radāta, 'First-given.' In connection with the story of Zariadres (p. 42) reference might have been made to the discussion of the legend by Rohde,<sup>26</sup> and the statement of Firmicus Maternus (*De errore prof. relig.* 5) regarding a female fire-deity (p. 104) receives support from a passage in the Syriac Acts of the Martyrs.<sup>27</sup> Clemen's book can not be pronounced a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Iranism.

<sup>25</sup> Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, Marburg, 1895, pp. 6, 48, 491, would read Atradates ('Fire-given').

<sup>26</sup> *Griechischer Roman*, 2d ed., Leipzig, 1900, pp. 47-54.

<sup>27</sup> Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer*, Leipzig, 1880, p. 35; Gray, *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society*, 1913-14, p. 46.